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B6, B1, 1.4(D)

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ACTION ARA-01

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	DODE-00	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EXIM-01	E-00
	FRB-00	H-01	IM-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	ITC-01
	LAB-01	L-01	ADS-00	DCP-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OMB-01
	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00
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R 271111Z JUL 98
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1232
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
USCINCSO MIAMI FL
CIA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
USIA WASHDC 1668
USDOC WASHDC 2972

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 CARACAS 002247

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SUBJECT: WHATEVER IT TAKES TO WIN: A VENEZUELAN CAMPAIGN NOTEBOOK,
ISSUE 9 (JULY 6-20)

CLASSIFIED BY
1.5(D).

REASON:

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WELCOME TO OUR CAMPAIGN NOTEBOOK

1. (U) THIS IS THE NINTH IN A BIWEEKLY SERIES OF REPORTS ON

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON
CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 1.4(D)
DECLASSIFY AFTER: 22 JUL 2013
DATE/CASE ID: 16 JUL 2009 200503654

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VENEZUELA'S 1998 ELECTIONS. DIVIDED INTO THREE SECTIONS--CAMPAIGN NEWS TICKER, VIGNETTES, AND HIGH-FLYERS AND BOTTOM-FEEDERS--WE HOPE TO USE THIS NOTEBOOK TO BRING YOU BREAKING NEWS, RUMORS AND INSIDER GOSSIP, AND PROFILES OF THE MANY POLITICAL HANDLERS, CAMPAIGN WORKERS, AND POLITICIANS WHO WILL MAKE THIS ELECTION HAPPEN. THIS NOTEBOOK IS DESIGNED TO COMPLEMENT OUR REGULAR POLITICAL REPORTING ON THE ELECTIONS, PROVIDING YOU A GLIMPSE OF THE "OFF CAMERA" POLITICS WHICH WILL NOT APPEAR ELSEWHERE.

CAMPAIGN NEWS TICKER

-- (U) HENRIQUE SALAS ROMER REGISTERED WITH THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COUNCIL (CNE) JULY 18 AS THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE FOR "PROYECTO VENEZUELA." HE ALSO PRESENTED TO THE CNE THE PROYECTO VENEZUELA CANDIDATES FOR CONGRESS AND 23 GOVERNORSHIPS.

-- (U) SALAS ROMER, IN AN EFFORT TO UNDERSCORE HIS INDEPENDENCE, SAID YET AGAIN HE WOULD NOT ALLY HIMSELF WITH ANY OTHER PARTY. ON
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THE BALLOT, SALAS ROMER'S IMAGE WILL NOT APPEAR WITH ANY OTHER CANDIDATE, AND HIS PARTY WILL NOT BE PAIRED WITH ANY OTHER PARTY.

-- (U) CLAUDIO FERMIN REGISTERED WITH THE CNE JULY 19 AS THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE FOR THE RENOVATION PARTY.

-- (U) IRENE PREPARED TO REGISTER HERSELF AS THE CANDIDATE OF THE IRENE PARTY, COPEI, AND THE RADICAL CAUSE PARTY ON JULY 21, BUT FOUND HERSELF MOMENTARILY TANGLED UP IN RUMORS THAT SHE WOULD WITHDRAW HER CANDIDACY. RUMORS OF HER WITHDRAWAL BEGAN TO CIRCULATE EARLY IN THE WEEK OF JULY 20 AS POLLING RESULTS FROM THE POLITICAL CONSULTANCY DATANALYSIS SHOWED SALAS ROMER HAD PASSED IRENE AND MOVED INTO SECOND PLACE (THIS RESULT HAS YET TO BE CONFIRMED BY OTHER POLLS), AS PROBLEMS BETWEEN COPEI AND THE RADICAL CAUSE PARTY MOUNTED OVER WHO THE ALLIANCE WOULD SUPPORT IN GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS, AND AS POLITICAL GOSSIPS BEGAN TO WHISPER THAT IRENE HAD SUFFERED A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN AND HAD BEEN HOSPITALIZED IN MIAMI FOR ONE WEEK (NOT TRUE). TO ALL THESE RUMORS, IRENE REPLIED, "NO. NO. NO. DESPITE THIS DIRTY CAMPAIGNING, I WILL REGISTER THIS COMING TUESDAY IN THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COUNCIL WITH ALL THE FORCES OF CHANGE THAT SUPPORT ME."

-- (U) THE CNE ANNOUNCED JULY 17 THAT 1,600,000 VOTERS HAVE REGISTERED TO VOTE, AND THAT THIS NUMBER WILL INCREASE BEFORE THE REGISTRATION PERIOD CLOSES ON JULY 26. OF THE REGISTRATION FORMS

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SUBMITTED TO THE CNE, APPROXIMATELY 500,000 HAVE BEEN PROCESSED, AND THE REST WILL BE PROCESSED WITHIN THE NEAR FUTURE. SO FAR, FIFTY PERCENT OF THE APPLICATIONS PROCESS HAVE BEEN NEW VOTERS, AND CNE OFFICIALS CLAIM THAT THE NUMBER OF NEW VOTERS REGISTERED WILL CLIMB TO CLOSE TO 1,000,000. THE OTHER VOTERS REGISTERED ARE THOSE WHO HAVE MOVED SINCE THE PREVIOUS ELECTIONS OR HAVE NOT VOTED IN

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TWO CONSECUTIVE ELECTIONS (VOTERS WHO MISS TWO CONSECUTIVE ELECTIONS ARE AUTOMATICALLY STRUCK FROM THE ROLLS).

-- (U) IXORA ROJAS, PRESIDENT OF THE HOUSE OF DEPUTIES, USED HER JULY 5 INDEPENDENCE DAY ADDRESS TO TELL THE NATION THAT DEMOCRACY CANNOT EXIST WITHOUT THE LEGISLATURE. IN REMARKS AIMED AT HUGO CHAVEZ'S THREAT TO CLOSE THE CONGRESS, ROJAS CALLED THE CONGRESS "THE EXPRESSION OF THE POPULAR WILL" AND SAID "DEMOCRACY IS NOT POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE CONCOURSE OF VOICES AND LEGISLATIVE WILL OF THIS CONGRESS." SHE ATTACKED "THE CULTURE OF VIOLENCE THAT ATTEMPTS TO UNDERMINE DEMOCRACY," AND CALLED FOR A NATIONAL ACCORD TO MEET THE CHALLENGES FACING VENEZUELA.

-- (U) THE HOMELAND FOR ALL PARTY (PPT) CALLED JULY 6 FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS TO BE HELD ON OCTOBER 6, TWO MONTHS EARLIER THAN THE DECEMBER 6 DATE SET BY THE CNE (THE ELECTORAL LAW MANDATES THAT THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS MUST BE HELD DURING THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF DECEMBER). PPT CONGRESSIONAL FLOOR LEADER JOSE ALBORNOZ SAID THAT MOVING THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS FORWARD IS THE ONLY WAY TO DEAL WITH THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CRISIS FACING THE COUNTRY, AND TO RESTORE GOVERNABILITY TO THE COUNTRY.

-- (U) NOTED INTELLECTUAL AND WRITER ARTURO USLAR PIETRI CALLED FOR THE FORMATION OF AN "EMERGENCY CABINET" TO DEAL WITH THE

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	LAB-01	L-01	ADS-00	DCP-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OMB-01
	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00

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R 271111Z JUL 98
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1233
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
USCINCSO MIAMI FL
CIA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
USIA WASHDC 1669
USDOC WASHDC 2973

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ECONOMIC CRISIS FACING THE COUNTRY. USLAR PIETRI CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT OF RAFAEL CALDERA, SAYING, "THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TELL THE COUNTRY THE TRUTH AND INVITE IT TO MAKE THE REFORMS IT HAS TO MAKE. UNFORTUNATELY, THESE THINGS ARE NOT SAID. HERE WE HAVE A TRADITION OF COVERING UP REALITY, AND WE DO NOT GIVE BAD NEWS. WE HAVE TO GIVE THE BAD NEWS." NOT CONTENT WITH THESE WORDS, USLAR PIETRI CONTINUED, "I WILL NOT FORM PART OF ANY CABINET. I AM VERY OLD AND I KNOW IT. THE PROBLEM IS, THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO ARE OLD AND DON'T KNOW IT." THE CALDERA GOVERNMENT WAS QUICK TO RESPOND. INTERIOR MINISTER ASDRUBAL AGUIAR CALLED USLAR PIETRI'S COMMENTS THE RESULT OF "ANEMIC DEPRESSION" AND CLAIMED THEY SHOW A "LACK OF CORRESPONDENCE WITH REALITY." AGUIAR CONTINUED, "USLAR HAS NOT ABANDONED THE PHANTASMS OF 1945, WHEN HIS POLITICAL WORK DISSOLVED IN HIS OWN HANDS." AGUIAR, IN HIS INIMITABLE FASHION, THEN SNORTED THAT USLAR PIETRI'S LATEST ARTICLES--PUBLISHED MOSTLY IN SPAIN AND ARGENTINA--ARE NO MATCH FOR HIS EARLIER WORKS, REMARKING, "ONE WOULD PREFER NOT TO KNOW THAT THEY ARE THE PRODUCT OF HIS PEN."

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WHATEVER HAPPENED TO DICK MORRIS?

2. (C) FAITHFUL READERS OF THE CAMPAIGN NOTEBOOK WILL REMEMBER THAT
AD'S SECRETARY GENERAL LEWIS PEREZ HAD HIRED DICK MORRIS TO CONDUCT
POLLS AND GIVE ADVICE WHEN PEREZ WAS STILL RUNNING FOR AD'S

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PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION. MORRIS AND PEREZ CARRIED ON A DIALOGUE
FOR MORE THAN A YEAR, WITH MORRIS TRAVELING TO VENEZUELA SEVERAL
TIMES, AND PEREZ SENDING EMISSARIES TO NEW YORK TO MEET WITH
MORRIS.

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CIA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
USIA WASHDC 1670
USDOC WASHDC 2974

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SO WHO DOES ALFARO TRUST?

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THE BISHOPS SPEAK ABOUT THE ELECTIONS

8. (U) VENEZUELA'S EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE ISSUED JULY 10 A NATIONAL LETTER ADDRESSING THE 1998 ELECTIONS. THE BISHOPS NOTED THAT VENEZUELAN BELIEVE THAT DEMOCRACY IS SOMETHING "THAT BELONGS TO THEM," AND ASSERTED THAT VENEZUELA'S RECENT POLITICAL PROBLEMS HAVE "OPENED THE POSSIBILITY OF MORE POLITICAL MATURITY AND BETTER AND MORE EFFECTIVE DEMOCRACY." THE BISHOPS IDENTIFIED VENEZUELA'S THREE BIGGEST POLITICAL PROBLEMS AS 1) THE "EXHAUSTION" OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES, 2) THE IDEOLOGICAL VACUUM WITHIN THE PARTIES, AND 3) THE DISILLUSIONMENT OF THE PEOPLE.

9. (U) IN AN EFFORT TO "ORIENT" CHURCH MEMBERS, THE BISHOPS MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

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"THOSE RESPONSIBLE: NATIONAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES, AS WELL AS PARTY LEADERS AND OTHER ELECTORAL GROUPS, SHOULD GIVE THEIR TOTAL SUPPORT TO THE REALIZATION OF THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS AS ESTABLISHED BY VENEZUELAN LAW. WE GIVE OUR SUPPORT TO THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COUNCIL THAT HAS THE MISSION TO PREPARE, UNDERTAKE, AND SUPERVISE THE ELECTIONS, AS WELL AS GUARANTEEING THE TRANSPARENCY OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS. WE ASK FOR THE COLLABORATION OF ALL CITIZENS AND INSTITUTIONS SO THAT THE ELECTIONS BECOME AN EXERCISE OF CIVIL PARTICIPATION AND OF DEMOCRATIC REAFFIRMATION. ONE SHOULD NOT FALL INTO THE TEMPTATION OF OVERSTATING OR MANIPULATING SURVEYS, SUCH AS HAS BEEN HAPPENING. THE RESULTS SHOULD BE RESPECTED AND SHOULD AVOID THE TEMPTATION OF FRAUD OR MANIPULATION. IN THE PAST THE CORRUPT PRACTICE OF DEVALUING VOTING BY MANIPULATING THE ELECTORAL

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ACTS WAS COMMON, WHICH STAINED THE ELECTIONS AND MADE FUN OF THE ELECTORATE: THOSE WHO ARE WORKING AT THE ELECTORAL TABLES DO NOT HAVE THE RIGHT OR THE PRIVILEGE OF CHANGING OR MODIFYING THE RESULTS. TO DO SO IS IMMORAL AND AN INSULT TO THE DIGNITY OF THE VENEZUELAN PEOPLE."

"PARTICIPATION OF CITIZENS: WE INVITE ALL VENEZUELAN TO REGISTER TO VOTE AND TO SHOW UP AT THEIR RESPECTIVE POLLING STATIONS ON THE DAYS SELECTED FOR THE ELECTIONS SO THAT THEY CAN EXERCISE THEIR RIGHT AND DUTY TO VOTE. SUCH PARTICIPATION IS NOT JUST GOING TO

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	FRB-00	H-01	IM-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	ITC-01
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R 271111Z JUL 98
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1235
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
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USIA WASHDC 1671
USDOC WASHDC 2975

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VOTE BUT RATHER TO ELECT THE AUTHORITIES WHO WILL GOVERN THE COUNTRY IN THE COMING YEARS. EACH ONE OF US SHOULD HELP ELECT THE PRESIDENT, GOVERNOR, MAYOR, LEGISLATOR, AND COUNCILMAN ACCORDING TO HIS FREE DECISION AND VOTE. IN THE SAME FASHION, ELECTORAL RESPONSIBILITY DOES NOT END IN THE MOMENT THE BALLOT IS DEPOSITED IN THE BALLOT BOX. VOTERS HAVE THE RIGHT AND OBLIGATION TO SUPERVISE THE COUNTING OF VOTES AND TO DEFEND THE RESULTS WITH THE MEANS DESCRIBED BY VENEZUELAN LAW."

"PROMISE OF THE POLITICIANS: DURING THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN, THE VARIOUS CANDIDATES WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROPOSE THEIR PLANS, PROGRAMS, AND IDEAS IN AN EFFORT TO CONVINCE THE VOTERS. IT IS NECESSARY THAT SAID CAMPAIGN BE CONDUCTED IN A DIGNIFIED AND RESPECTFUL MANNER, WHERE HEALTHY CONFRONTATION DOES NOT SUPPOSE OFFENSE, DEFAMATION, OR DIRTY CAMPAIGNING. TRUTH SHOULD SHINE THROUGH THE PROPOSALS AND PROMISES THAT ARE MADE, ACCOMPANIED BY POLITICAL WILL TO KEEP THESE PROMISES. AFTERWARDS, THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS SHOULD BE RESPECTED AND THOSE ELECTED TO VARIOUS JOBS HAVE TO COMPLY WITH THE PROMISES MADE AND WORK FOR ALL CITIZENS, CONVOKING THEM ALL TO PARTICIPATE TOGETHER IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MORE JUST SOCIETY. ONCE ELECTED, THEY SHOULD NOT ENCLOSE THEMSELVES IN THEIR OFFICES OR PARTY HEADQUARTERS, BUT RATHER SHOULD PROMOTE DIALOGUE WITH ALL SECTORS OF SOCIETY AS A SERVICE DONE IN SOLIDARITY WITH ALL CITIZENS. WE CALL ON ALL CATHOLICS THAT PARTICIPATE IN POLITICS AND IN THE EXERCISE OF POWER TO ACT IN ACCORD WITH WHAT THEY BELIEVE AND LIVE, PUTTING IN PRACTICE CHRIST'S VALUES IN THE CONTEXT OF POLITICS."

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CHAVEZ ON CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

10. (U) CHAVEZ SPOKE JULY 16 AT A CONFERENCE SPONSORED BY THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (NHRC). ALL MAJOR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES WERE INVITED TO SPEAK TO NGOS AND THE PUBLIC ABOUT THEIR VIEW OF HUMAN RIGHTS. MOST PRESENTATIONS WERE SCHEDULED FOR ONE HOUR, WITH AN EXTRA THIRTY MINUTES ALLOCATED FOR QUESTIONS. CHAVEZ SPOKE FOR NEARLY THREE HOURS, AND THEN ACCEPTED ANOTHER HOUR'S WORTH OF QUESTIONS. ONE OF THE QUESTIONS ASKED WAS, "WHAT DO YOU THINK OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION TO MILITARY SERVICE." CHAVEZ RESPONDED, "WHEN I COMMANDED A PARACHUTE UNIT, I HAD SEVERAL SOLDIERS WHO BECAME CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS WHEN I TRIED TO GET

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THEM TO JUMP OUT OF AN AIRPLANE. THESE GUYS JUST REFUSE TO JUMP. I WENT TO MY COMMANDING OFFICER AND ASK FOR PERMISSION TO RELEASE THESE SOLDIERS AS CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS. THIS REQUEST WAS DENIED, AND THE SOLDIERS WERE RETURNED TO MY UNIT. THESE SOLDIERS BECAME THE BEST COOKS I EVER HAD."

CHAVEZ ON PRISON REFORM

11. (U) WHEN ASKED FOR HIS VIEWS ON PRISON REFORM, CHAVEZ SAID, "AS ONE OF THE FEW CANDIDATES TO ACTUALLY SPEND TIME IN PRISON, I HAVE VERY DEFINITE VIEWS ON PRISON REFORM." HE THEN NOTED THAT PRISONERS NEED TO BE KEPT OCCUPIED, AND PROPOSED WORK AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR PRISONERS. THINKING BACK ON HIS PRISON DAYS, HE RECALLED, "WE ORGANIZED OURSELVES. WE EXERCISED, WE READ, AND WE DEVELOPED HOBBIES. SOME OF US STARTED SMALL GARDENS, GROWING TOMATOES AND CORN TO SUPPLEMENT OUR DIET. ARIAS CARDENAS DEVOTED HIMSELF TO RAISING FIGHTING GAMECOCKS. HE BECAME VERY GOOD

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AT IT, AND HIS COCKS BECAME THE CHAMPIONS OF YARE (THE NAME OF THE PRISON WHERE CHAVEZ WAS HELD)."

HIGH FLYERS AND BOTTOM-FEEDERS

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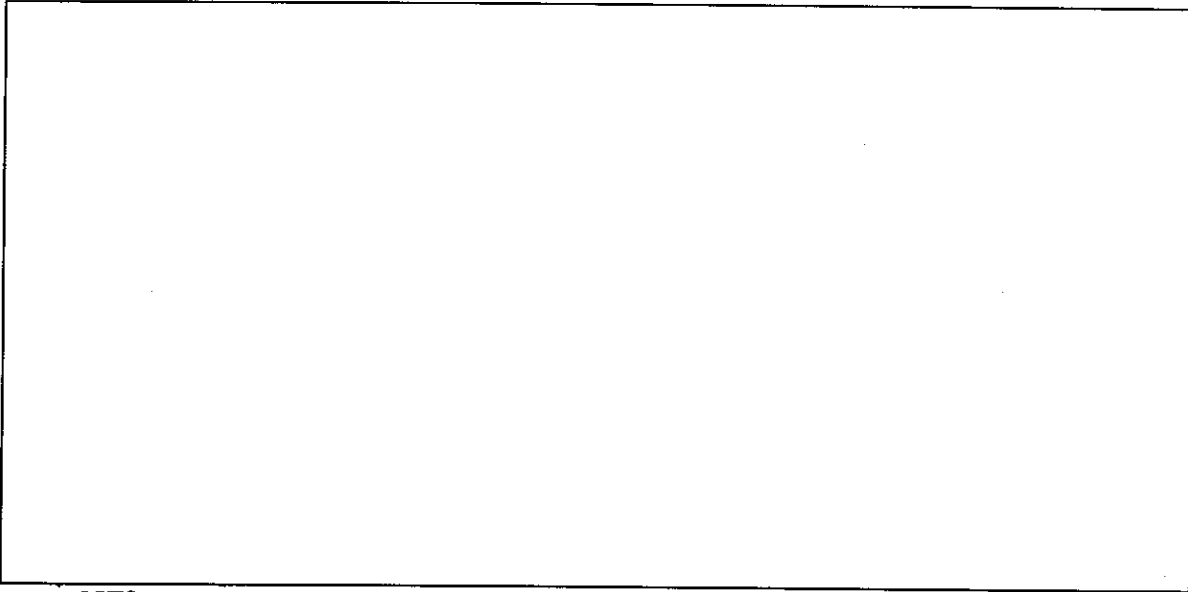
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